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GAMING · COLLECTIBLES · MOVIES · TV & MORE

ISSUE NO. 8

SPECIAL FALL TV PREVUE

NINTENDO SWITCH IS GAMING ON-THE-GO AT ITS BEST

Gotham Nights
Ruby Rose Is BATWOMAN

Crisis Management
Infinite Earths Comes To The CW

So Be It Jedi
Star Wars: Fallen Order

Halloween Treats
Blair Witch Returns

NINTENDO SWITCH

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Nintendo Switch Lite

IT'S SUPERMEN!

IF YOU'VE BEEN READING *GEEK* THE LAST COUPLE of years, it's no secret that we revel in the return of the CW superhero shows every year. *Arrow*, *The Flash*, *Supergirl* and *DC's Legends of Tomorrow* have been on regular rotation in our living rooms since they started (well, since *The Flash* started at least), and we get almost as excited for them as we do for our yearly fix of Marvel movies. While the DC movie universe has been very slow out of the starting gate (although we have to admit we had a blast with the ridiculous but fun *Aquaman*), the CW shows have proven to be both reverent about the DC comic book and movie legacies, but also loose and funny enough to have a good time and embrace all the goofiest tropes of the DC universe.

We're super excited about the new *Batwoman* show as we're always up for a new female superhero, and the CW shows have proven fertile ground for that with Melissa Benoist's perfect, uplifting *Supergirl* and her flipside, Kathy Lotz's take-no-prisoners Sara "White Canary" Lance of *Legends of Tomorrow*, who easily breezed from a tough-talking supporting character to a completely convincing action hero and leader as the show has evolved. Sara's relationship with insecure Time Bureau head Ava Sharpe (Jes Macallan) is progressive and often hilarious, and so is Lotz, who in interviews insists she's never been comfortable playing comedy, but on screen is quietly brilliant at it.

We're also closet fans of Brandon Routh's *Superman* in 2006's ill-fated *Superman Returns*, so what we're really excited about this season is the news that Routh will reprise the role of Superman in the *Crisis on Infinite Earths* crossover event at the end of the year. It's a bittersweet gift because this comes along with the news that Routh will likely be leaving *DC's Legends of Tomorrow*, which has become the loosest and goofiest of all the CW superhero shows. In *Superman Returns*, Routh was hobbled by the long shadow of Christopher Reeve and the movie's solemn attempt to recapture the mood of Richard Donner's 1978 *Superman: The Movie*. We loved the idea, but what the reboot lacked was the original's sense of fun, and the classic, romantic comedy chemistry between Reeve and Margot Kidder's Lois Lane.

Routh in fact was a more engaging Clark Kent as *Legend's* Ray "The Atom" Palmer than he was while actually playing Kent in *Superman Returns*. Tyler Hoechlin has made an engaging Superman in *Supergirl* and the previous crossover movies, so it will be fascinating to see him up against Routh as a Superman reportedly inspired by Alex Ross's *Kingdom Come*.

This has the potential to be the most outrageous and entertaining DC crossover yet, and the CW shows continue to leave the DC movies in the dust as far as capturing the DC heroes' inherent optimism goes.

Jeff Bond
Editor
August 2019

geek

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INSIDE ISSUE 8

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GEEKY

SPOTLIGHTING THE COOLEST COLLECTIBLES AND GEEK GEAR IN THE UNIVERSE

From the editors of *Geek* Magazine

GODZILLA: THE SHOWA-ERA FILMS, 1954-1975 (THE CRITERION COLLECTION)

If you're a Godzilla fan, no matter how you may have felt about this year's *Godzilla: King of the Monsters*, you're likely verklempt about Criterion's announcement of all 15 of Toho's *Godzilla* movies from the Showa era, the first two decades of the giant monster's pop culture rampage through Japan and the rest of the world. Sony and other vendors have released *Godzilla* films on Blu-ray off and on, but never in any organized or comprehensive form. To see the best versions of the films, fans have had to shell out $70-$80 a pop for Toho's region-free Blu-rays, which look spectacular and boast tons of special features — but which do not feature English subtitles or other content in English.

The Criterion set solves that problem for all 15 movies, delivering the stellar Toho transfers with English subtitles and providing fans with the first-ever U.S. Blu-ray releases of the first *Godzilla* sequel, the black-and-white *Godzilla Raids Again*, the debut of three-headed space dragon Ghidorah in 1964's *Ghidorah, The Three-Headed Monster*, and director Ishiro Honda's surprisingly good swan song for the series, *The Terror of MechaGodzilla* from 1975.

The original 1954 *Gojira* got a superb restoration via Criterion in 2012 that showed off the original Japanese version's classic status: It's a dark, film noir monster movie that shows the psychic wounds of the Japanese populace as they deal with the devastation wrought by the lumbering, thoughtless Godzilla. The later films increasingly became Saturday matinee romps

THINGS

for children, but their brilliantly colorful design, the ingenious monster suit special effects by Eiji Tsuburaya, the vivid monster sounds and composer Akira Ifukube's mythic-sounding musical scores turn many of them into rousing entertainment.

Godzilla Raids Again introduced the "monster mash" idea of pitting Godzilla against other giant monsters, although its Godzilla vs. Anguiras fights are marred by Tsubaraya and his crew speeding up the action rather than slowing it down as they did with the monster action in the other films. The first *Ghidorah* movie begins to veer into comedy, but you have to love its countryside-spanning early battle between Rodan and Godzilla. After increasingly bizarre '70s outings like *Godzilla vs. Gigan* (a parrot-beaked monster with a buzz-saw in its stomach) and *Godzilla vs. Hedorah* (a monster made of pollution), 1975's *Terror of MechaGodzilla* returned the series to its moodier, more epic roots, with Godzilla making one of his most impressive entrances in the series. This set, loaded with special features and brilliant, custom artwork, will be available just in time for Halloween.

SPIDER-MAN COLLECTOR'S BOX
(CULTUREFLY)

If you're still depressed about the Sony/MCU Spider-Man breakup, you can salve that wound with this spiffy collector's box that includes a Spidey-themed tote bag, two Spider-Man pins, a notebook and other goodies. Remember: With great power comes great collectibility.

STRANGER THINGS 3: STEVE WITH HAT AND ICE CREAM
(FUNKO POP!)

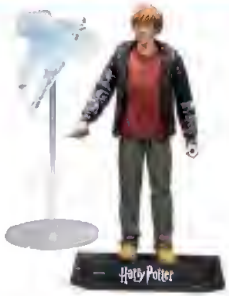
If this year's Comic-Con cosplay was any indication, the most popular thing about *Stranger Things 3* was hunky but terminally confused Steve and his Scoops Ahoy ice cream shop uniform. Now you can own Steve in super-cute Funko POP! form — but let's just say there better be a Robin figure coming as well.

HARRY POTTER ACTION FIGURE
(MCFARLANE TOYS)

Man, they really put poor Harry through the wringer in those *Harry Potter* films, didn't they? Good thing he had that non-corporeal Patronus to help protect him from the Dementors. No young wizard should be without one, so this deluxe 7" action figure of Harry comes complete with the haunting deer Patronus Harry glimpses in the woods at a crucial point in the story.

VOLDEMORT ACTION FIGURE
(MCFARLANE TOYS)

You're never supposed to say the name "Voldemort" — it's like saying "Macbeth" to an actor. But there, we already said it. What else are you going to call this awesome 7" action figure (that comes complete with Voldy's deadly serpent, Nagini)? "He Who Must Not Be Named"? Yeah, that's the ticket...



RON WEASELY ACTION FIGURE
(MCFARLANE TOYS)

Even sidekicks need their own Patronuses in the *Harry Potter* world, so hapless but (mostly) loyal Ron Weasley comes complete with his own Terrier Patronus as well as a display base, background art and Ron's trusty magic wand.

STRANGER THINGS COLLECTOR'S BOX
(CULTUREFLY)

You can while away the hours waiting for *Stranger Things* season 4 with this collector's box featuring a light-up tote bag, D20 coin bank, Hawkins Police socks, a comic book with an exclusive Tomm Coker variant cover and a vinyl figure of everyone's favorite super-powered government experiment, Eleven! There's even a waffle coaster set for those intimate family breakfasts between Eleven and Chief Hopper.

THE FLASH: THE COMPLETE SERIES
(WARNER HOME VIDEO)

Did you know there was another live-action *Flash* superhero series produced years before the popular CW show? John Wesley Shipp played Barry Allen on this 1990 series (he now plays Barry's ill-fated dad and an alternate Earth "Golden Age Flash" on the new show), which featured exciting theme music by Danny Elfman and pretty great special effects for the time. You can't comprehend the complexity of the *Flash* mythos without it!

THE FLASH: THE COMPLETE FIFTH SEASON
(WARNER HOME VIDEO)

If you want to gear up for the season debuts of the various CW superhero shows, you'd better start catching up on stuff like *The Flash* season 5 and all of that unnerving stuff with Barry Allen and Iris' daughter from the future. We don't want to give the game away, but we think that scary Reverse-Flash might be involved...

NINTENDO SWITCH

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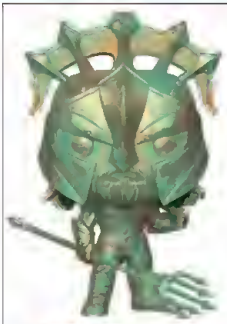

ARTHUR CURRY AS GLADIATOR FIGURE

(FUNKO POP! HEROES)

We heartily endorse the *Aquaman* movie as the greatest Vegas floor show ever put on film. You can celebrate the underwater glitz with this adorable figure of Arthur Curry ready to battle his evil brother in submarine gladiator combat. This Walmart exclusive features a special "patina" finish that makes Aquaman look like an ancient bronze statue.

STRANGER THINGS 3 ELEVEN

(MCFARLANE TOYS)

After all the shaved heads and nosebleeds, it was a relief to finally see Eleven go on a shopping and makeover spree and go all girly right before using her apocalyptic superpowers to take on a gigantic monster at the end of *Stranger Things 3*. Now, you can commemorate Eleven's awesome fashion renaissance with this collectible figure that comes complete with Starcourt shopping bag (natch!), alternate hands and a walkie-talkie.

MOVIE MOMENTS: THOR VS. THANOS

(FUNKO POP!)

Relive the moment in *Avengers: Endgame* when the Mighty but truly out-of-shape Thor decided to finally get his act together and wallop the evil Thanos. It's exactly what we wanted to do.

STAR WARS: LEIA ON SPEEDER BIKE

(FUNKO POP! HEROES)

Princess Leia is about to presumably make her swan song in *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* — but you can recall the carefree days of Ewoks and speeder bikes with this zooming figure of Leia in her Endor forest gear, throttling up her trusty speeder bike.

GAME OF THRONES: DROGON AND DAENERYS

(FUNKO POP!)

Game of Thrones is dead! Sad face! If you were a big fan of dragon queen Daenerys, you can just pretend certain final season plot developments never happened by owning this figure of Khaleesi and her beloved dragon Drogon. Now they can ride together forever! *sob*

FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY'S MICRO CONSTRUCTION SET

(MCFARLANE TOYS)

We haven't seen the *Banana Splits* horror movie yet, but we'll be surprised if it's as scary as *Five Nights at Freddy's*, which posits the terrifying idea of characters trapped overnight in something like a very dangerous version of a Chuck E. Cheese restaurant. Now, you can relive that frightening prospect with this Micro Construction Set that comes complete with balloons, a poster and an animatronic Freddy himself.

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Switch-ed On!

NINTENDO ADDS TO ITS FLAGSHIP PLATFORM WITH THE ULTIMATE PORTABLE GAMING SYSTEM.

by Matt Cabral

X
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A
B
NINTENDO
SWITCH

As any owner of the popular Nintendo Switch system will attest, one of the platform's absolute coolest features is its ability to play console-quality games in its portable, handheld mode. Visually stunning blockbusters, crammed with content and brought to life with bar-raising production values, previously had to be consumed at home either in front of a TV or computer.

Upon its release in early 2017, the Switch changed all that, allowing us to indulge in the medium's best games just about anywhere, from subway trains and doctors' office waiting rooms to the comfiest, quietest spots in our home. Having to hunker down indoors to dive into a sprawling open-world role-playing game was no longer the only option.

Of course, the Switch can also be docked in its station and hooked up to a TV or other compatible display. While a fantastic feature that plays a primary role in defining the platform's innovative, hybrid design, it's not a necessity for gamers who typically play on-the-go. For those folks, the standard Switch's home console side — and the extra cost it adds to the hardware — could present a considerable barrier to entry.

OLD FAVES, NEW LIFE

AT OVER 2,000 TITLES AND COUNTING, the Switch Lite's library is bigger than Donkey Kong's appetite for bananas. Big-budget blockbusters, hidden-gem indies and, of course, every Nintendo first-party game featuring the likes of *Link*, *Mario* and all their friends are waiting to be enjoyed in the palm of your hand.

Some of the system's best-kept secrets, though, are games that previously made a splash on consoles and computers, but can now be played, well, anywhere. The Switch's — and now the Lite's — most impressive accomplishment is that its portability doesn't come at the cost of playing these performance-intensive titles.

Whether you're craving the role-playing depth and immersive dungeon-crawling action of *Diablo III: Eternal Collection* or the player-punishing combat and high-fantasy thrills of *Dark Souls Remastered*, you no longer need to stay home to dive into these blockbusters. If *Cuphead*'s old-school difficulty and 1930s animation style is more your bag, the Lite's the perfect place to play it.

If you really want to get lost in an epic, *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* will happily eat up 100 or so hours of your free time. The acclaimed entry in Bethesda Game Studios' sprawling, dragon-slaying, open-world RPG includes all the original's expansions and add-ons, as well as *The Legend of Zelda*-specific content that puts your character behind the power of Link's iconic Master Sword.

If you're looking for a fresh way to enjoy these favorites or you're discovering them for the very first time, playing them on the Lite — at a park, cafe or beach — just might see you permanently abandoning your home rig.

FOR PORTABLE PLAYERS

The new Nintendo Switch Lite obliterates that barrier, crushing it like a Goomba and inviting on-the-fence gamers to come on down and join the Switch family. Targeted at gamers who spend more time out and about than on the couch, the Lite is specifically designed for dedicated portable play. Smaller, lighter and more compact than the flagship Switch, it takes its big brother's best features and squeezes them into a smaller package.

Best of all, at $199, it cuts 100 shiny gold coins off the price of the original Switch. A few of the more home-based features — such as the detachable Joy-Con controllers, HD Rumble and IR camera are lost — but the trade-off puts a leaner Switch in your pocket, as well as enough extra dollars to buy must-have games like *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* or *Super Mario Odyssey*.

Remarkably, the first thing that hits you when you see

LITE ACCESSORIES YOU CAN COUNT ON

Nintendo Switch Lite Carrying Case

The Switch Lite is pretty sturdy, but you'll still want to protect it on long trips or at crowded conventions. Enter Nintendo's Switch Lite Carrying Case, a sleek option specifically designed to accommodate the handheld's smaller dimensions. Featuring a sturdy exterior and soft interior, the case has got the Lite covered back-to-front. And unobtrusive compartments for games and MicroSDs ensure all your goodies are easily accessible and organized, while an included screen protector will keep that pretty display from getting scratched up.

Astro A10 Gaming Headset – *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*

A favorite on the standard Switch, Astro Gaming's *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* A10 Headset is also a perfect fit for Lite adopters. Combining quality and collectibility, the set delivers Astro's premium audio tech with a heaping side of Zelda fan-service. Its durable, ergonomic design also makes it a great traveling companion, remaining comfy on long plane rides while not breaking when shoved into the seatback pocket.

Nintendo Switch Adjustable Charging Stand

Nintendo's adjustable charging stand is a no-brainer, as it serves multiple purposes, complementing the Lite's unique design. For starters, it charges the unit; the Lite's packed with a beefy battery, but having a little more juice on a long trip is never a bad idea. Additionally, the accessory works as an adjustable stand while it's charging, allowing you to position the Lite (which does not have a Switch-like kickstand) however you like.

Nintendo Switch Pro Controller

The Pro Controller isn't just a fantastic Nintendo gamepad, it's one of the medium's best peripherals, period. If you're ever craving that comforting controller grip or are playing a game with more complex inputs, the Pro is a great choice. It also syncs effortlessly with the Lite. Fire it up while the Lite sits and charges in the adjustable stand, and you can essentially enjoy a full-featured home console experience wherever you please.

device isn't its diminutive size, but its eye-popping paint job. The unit is available in a nice shade of gray — for the more conservative fan — but its turquoise and yellow versions are also hard to pass up. Channeling the vibrant vibe of Nintendo's family-friendly library of games, these two more colorful options wouldn't look out of place as props in Mario's Mushroom Kingdom.

Once you get your mitts on the Lite, its mobile-focused perks become more evident. Its light yet sturdy build feels like something you could comfortably clutch for a lengthy play session but not have to worry about getting banged up on a bumpy commute. Compared to previous portable gaming systems, its design is more PlayStation Vita than Nintendo 3DS. Like the former, it sports more of a rectangular tablet-like look, while abandoning the clamshell design of the latter. Most important, though, it doesn't feel like a dumbed-down Switch but a dedicated portable gaming system.

CUSTOM CONTROLS

The Lite's controls play a big part in making the system feel like the next portable platform you'll want to take everywhere. The placement of the various inputs and ports — from the game card and MicroSD slots to the USB-C connector and volume controls — largely mimics that of the standard Switch, as does the layout of the buttons and triggers you'll be blistering your thumbs on. Because the system

■ EYE-POPPING PORTABLE: The Switch Lite launches in a trio of cool colors for Nintendo fans of all stripes.

CATCH THIS COLLECTIBLE!

IF YOU'RE A SEASONED *POKEMON* PLAYER, a rabid collector of the cute creatures or just consider your adorable Pikachu plush your most prized possession, you may want to wait a bit longer before picking up a Switch Lite.

On November 8, a little under two months after the standard Lite lands on store shelves, Nintendo will release a special *Pokemon*-themed version of the new platform. Officially dubbed the Nintendo Switch Lite Zacian and Zamazenta Edition, the system sports the same specs, features and price tag as the regular Lite, but cranks up the fan-service — and collectibility — with a few *Pokemon*-focused cosmetic touches.

In support of the hotly anticipated upcoming series entries, *Pokemon Sword* and *Pokemon Shield*, the limited-run hardware features a light gray shell, nicely contrasted with cyan and magenta buttons. Flip the unit over, though, and you'll discover the real reason to add this one to your collection.

Illustrations of the two new Legendary Pokemon from the upcoming games appear on the back of the device. Facing off on either side of the Switch's logo, Zacian and Zamazenta are brought to life with an appealing hand-drawn style.

Whether you want to gift the best *Pokemon* present ever or are just seeking a fresh way to satisfy your own fandom, you'll want to wait a little longer to catch this coveted new member of the Switch family.

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doesn't include detachable Joy-Cons, however, the primary controls are nicely embedded into the shell and optimized for portable play, further cementing that handheld feel.

Subtler, but equally significant, are the more minor changes some of the controls have undergone. For starters, the original Switch's four separate directional arrow buttons — located on its left Joy-Con — have been replaced with Nintendo's classic +Control Pad. The fan-favorite directional pad (or D-pad) has appeared on most of Nintendo's platforms, including the original Nintendo Entertainment System. It's also been a staple of its many portable devices within the Game Boy and DS families. For longtime fans of the company's mobile devices, using the intuitive +Control Pad will feel like reconnecting with an old friend.

The spot-on button layout, further complemented by ZL and ZR triggers that feel far click-ier than their standard Switch counterparts, lend themselves to the Lite's dedicated handheld design. Toss in the improved battery life and full access to Nintendo's online features and the gadget fits the bill for all your on-the-go gaming needs.

And for portable gaming fans craving a bit more functionality, the Lite can also sync with many of the Switch's existing peripherals, including the popular Pro Controller. While the Lite doesn't include onboard motion-sensing controls, this feature can still be enjoyed when separate Joy-Cons are synced with the Lite. Speaking of syncing, the system can also be wirelessly linked to other Lite units for cooperative and competitive play with family and friends. The Lite also retains some other cool features, like "steering" the entire device in *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* or panning it, camera-like, for games supporting this first-person perspective feature.

Whether you've been eyeing the Switch's ability to play console-quality games — but weren't interested in its home-based features — or you're an existing early adopter who's discovered the system's more fun to play in handheld mode, the Lite is just begging to become your new go-to gaming gadget.

TALKING TECH SPECS

IT DOESN'T TAKE MORE THAN A QUICK GLANCE to recognize that the Switch Lite is notably smaller than its big brother. Pick it up and you'll also find it's not as hefty. But if you're primarily basing your buying decision on these comparisons, you're probably wondering exactly how much smaller and lighter it is. Well, you can put away your tape measure and scale, as we've broken down all the geeky details, from size, weight, battery life and beyond.

The Switch Lite is 3.6" high, 8.2" long and .55" deep, where the standard Switch comes in at 4" high, 9.4" long and also .55" deep (with its Joy-Cons attached). The Lite also earns its moniker, clocking in as .61 lbs versus its predecessor's .88 lbs. In terms of the screen, the Lite doesn't lose as much real estate as you might expect. At 5.5 inches — quite respectable for a handheld gaming device — it, er, measures up quite nicely next to the original platform's 6.2-inch display.

Its resolution doesn't miss a beat either, supporting 720p. In fact, the Lite's LCD display is actually a hair sharper, thanks to the smaller screen squeezing all those pixels together a bit tighter. Battery size is slightly more complicated, as the original Switch is technically available in two nearly identical models; the system's debut in 2017 packed approximately 3-7 hours of juice, while the updated model, released recently, carries a 9-hour max charge. The Lite's battery life matches that of the launch-day Switch.

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by Edward Gross

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

■ Batwoman (Ruby Rose) made her debut in last year's *Elseworlds* crossover — now she's preparing to head up her own show on The CW.

FOR ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN WATCHING the DC superhero shows airing on The CW — *Arrow*, *The Flash*, *Supergirl*, *Legends of Tomorrow*, *Black Lightning* and, now, *Batwoman* — one of the highlights they've come to anticipate is the annual crossover between all of them. Yet even with the wide-ranging adventures that have already been brought to life, few could have possibly imagined the shows' respective producers tackling one of DC's biggest comic book events, *Crisis on Infinite Earths*.

Published between April 1985 and March 1986, *Crisis* was the brainchild of writer Marv Wolfman and artist George Perez, both clearly aware of the wide-ranging impact it could have on DC as a whole — which was the plan in the first place.

"These days, DC and Marvel continually trade places as to which company has the most readers," Wolfman says. "One month it's DC. Next month it's Marvel. And so on, back and forth. But back in the 1980s, DC's sales lagged far behind Marvel. Many Marvel fans wouldn't even bother looking at a DC comic. In fact, they really called themselves 'Marvel Zombies.' They were certain the DC universe couldn't ever be good. Something was needed to show those readers that DC had great characters and great books."

To that end, Wolfman came up with and proposed a 12-part maxi-series that would use every hero DC had to prove to the "Zombies" that, at the very least, they should give DC a try. "Something like this," he says, "featuring over 400 characters in a universe-altering story, had never been tried before. It was a major risk and it could have failed, but DC approved my idea and, working with George Perez, we created a story that showed the Marvel Zombies how good DC could be."

"And it was a daunting task," he emphasizes, "If we had failed, it was very possible that fans might never check out another DC comic again. But we took several years to carefully work out the story and to make sure it all worked. Fortunately, George and I were totally committed to this series and we built a story even the Marvel fans loved. Our slogan was, 'Worlds will

live. Worlds will die. And the DC Universe will never be the same.' And because we honored that pledge, readers still care for it. *Crisis* made such a big impact, companies are still publishing company crossovers, hoping to catch that elusive lightning in a bottle."

Now it's TV's turn. In the comics, over the decades DC writers had postulated a multitude of parallel Earths with characters similar to but different in some ways from ours on Earth-1. It had all become unwieldy so the idea was to manufacture a "crisis" that would bring those Earths together, with heroes being lost along the way. Most of the so-called Arrowverse shows take place on Earth-1, though the events of *Supergirl* take place on Earth-38. The television version of *Crisis* will reportedly bring those two worlds together, while involving characters from different Earths as well.

The premise of the story is that the Anti-Monitor is a cosmic being who, having been exposed to antimatter, is going around the galaxy destroying different realities so that he can absorb them and expand his own empire. Going up against him is the Monitor, who is trying to protect the remaining realities and is choosing champions to help him do so. In the comic book version, he and the heroes succeeded, but there were casualties, among them Supergirl and the Flash. While there's a question of which heroes will make it out of the event alive, it seems that the TV version is promising some pretty radical changes as well.

"I'm just incredibly grateful that we get a chance to do it," says Stephen Amell, who plays Oliver Queen/Green Arrow. "I mean, it's the gold standard of DC tales, you know what I mean? And the fact that we get to do it, and the fact that it coincides with us wrapping up our part of the journey ... come on! It's amazing. I never could have imagined it, but I'm eternally grateful we're doing it."

As executive producer Marc Guggenheim points out, "I would say for *Arrow*, *Crisis* is very impactful. I think for all the shows it's very impactful. We're obviously dealing this year with some really cosmic, big stuff and the conversations that myself and all of the showrunners have had is that this crossover provides us with the opportunity to do something pretty radical with all the shows. I never like to make these sorts of promises, but specifically in the case of *Arrow*, the ramifications are pretty big. Since we know we only have two episodes left after the crossover finishes up, we have a luxury that the other shows don't have."

■ Get ready to bid a fond farewell to Team *Arrow*...

■ Ruby Rose as Katherine Kane prepares to suit up while associate Luke Fox (Camrus Johnson) looks on.

Flash executive producer Eric Wallace doesn't seem too concerned about the crossover's overall impact. "I think *Crisis* happening when it's happening has turned out to be the biggest blessing for this show possible," he says. "We have something that has to be dealt with in the middle of our

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season. We know when *Crisis* airs, so we have to drive toward that. As a result, it gave us a season that broke very neatly into three sections. The first is pre-*Crisis* building up to the dread that's hanging over them."

That dread comes from a couple of places. Notably on *The Flash*, there's been a promise from a future newspaper headline that Barry Allan would disappear in 2024, but at the end of last season something happened to the timeline and the date shifted to 2019. Additionally, at the end of last year's crossover, *Elseworlds*, Oliver Queen made some sort of deal with the Monitor to save Supergirl and the Flash so that they could, in turn, save the world. What price will he have to pay? We're likely to find out.

"So where's the Monitor and what's going to happen to Oliver?" Wallace asks rhetorically. "And then there's *Crisis* itself that we'll be dealing with, which is its own self-contained kind of miniseries. And what does the post-*Crisis Flash* even look like? We've been waiting for five and a half years with this newspaper holographic thing hanging over us and now it reads 2019. Once we get past that it's a whole new game, a new world. I'm a very comic book geeky guy, so let the comic book geeky games begin starting post-*Crisis*. On *The Flash*, you're going to see in season 6 a little bit more of a comic book feel, while also deepening the character emotions."

"I'M A VERY COMIC BOOK GEEKY GUY, SO LET THE COMIC BOOK GEEKY GAMES BEGIN."

Although the character of Batwoman (played by Ruby Rose) was introduced on last year's crossover, *Elseworlds*, her own show is only getting underway this fall. For executive producer Caroline Dries, Crisis presents some interesting challenges, largely because, like *Arrow*, especially early on, this is intended to be a down and dirty, gritty series.

"What was really important to me as we were breaking the crossover is that I wanted to really keep the tone of our show in Gotham and very grounded," she explains. "We are just starting out, and for our characters it's not normal for them to interact with aliens and travel to different universes and stuff like that. So that is the first thing I brought up to the writers." Over at BatwomanTV.com, she elaborates, "Kate obviously has already met Kara, so the cat's out of the bag in terms of the aliens existing. But at the same time, our characters are going through such intimate personal drama that I'm going to try to keep it so that they're not also dealing with, like, 'Wait, the universe is ending? Wait, there are other forms of people in different universes?' All this stuff that I, as Caroline, was learning about when I sat down to be briefed on *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. It's just a fine line of not overwhelming them with this huge otherworldly scope."

Ruby Rose, who plays the dual role of Batwoman and Kate Kane, felt overwhelmed last year when she interacted with Melissa Benoist's *Supergirl* in the crossover. "I think it

LaMonica Garrett as the Monitor prepares to face his greatest foe: the Anti-Monitor.

BLACK LIGHTNING SEASON 3

As far as Cress Williams is concerned, his Black Lightning alter ego of Jefferson Pierce is going to be going through some changes in the show's third season, and not necessarily all good. "I think he's going to go to some darker places," the actor muses, "and maybe even some angrier places. We started season 1 where he was his most hopeful. He wasn't having to use his powers, his school [where he serves as principal] was thriving. His daughters were thriving. Then we kind of went into a reality check and I think we're in that dark place now, and maybe we can pull back up to become more hopeful again."

TEEN T ESRB
Blood
Mild Language
Use of Alcohol
Violence

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ICEBORNE EXPANSION* ALSO AVAILABLE AS A DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

*Requires Monster Hunter: World (sold separately)

was easier for everyone else and quite difficult for myself," she admits. "I definitely went in with very little information aside from what I read in the comics. We had an idea of where the *Batwoman* series was going to go, but there were a lot of question marks. So I had to shut off the noise and go with what I knew and sort of just play it. When we got to the pilot, I was very thankful to fill in all of the blanks and all of the questions that I had. At the same time, I love seeing that iconic moment of Batwoman and Supergirl and just the cinematography of it all. It was just a really amazing moment, and I do believe that there will be more of that."

Many of the other actors may be overwhelmed by *Crisis*, but in a good way given the number of surprises that are apparently en route. One of the big ones was the announcement that not only would Tyler Hoechlin be reprising the role of Superman in *Crisis*, but that Brandon Routh, who plays Ray Palmer/The Atom on *DC's Legends of Tomorrow*, and who had played the Man of Steel in 2006's *Superman Returns*, is getting the opportunity to don the red and blue costume again for a Superman from yet another Earth.

"YOU THROW A STONE INTO THE POND, THE RIPPLE EFFECT CONTINUES AND CREATES OTHER RIPPLE EFFECTS."

"I'm excited," says Routh, who has embraced the passion of fans that has followed him for all these years. "I will say it was a little strange when they asked me, to be honest. I'd hoped maybe there'd be an opportunity sometime, but didn't really think that that actually would happen. So I kind of felt like a little kid; very shocked and excited and happy. If you imagine my collective experience as a patchwork quilt, Superman is half of the quilt almost. And the rest of everything that's come in the last 13 years has continually been affected by the experience, both work-wise and then emotionally and personally. And with the people that I meet, it's like a ripple. You throw a stone into the pond, the ripple effect continues and creates other ripple effects. Everyone who has an experience to share about *Superman Returns* is a part of that story, and it affects me in some way. I guess if I didn't take it in, if I just had a wall up and said, 'That happened 13 years ago, it's not even a part of me anymore,' then I wouldn't be affected by it. Actually, I'd just be affected by it negatively. But I choose to take in that energy and shared experience that people have as an awesome continued participation in my life."

Grant Gustin, who has never made any secret of the fact that he is a massive Superman fan, enthuses, "Brandon actually texted me three or four days before the news was announced. He was, like, "I wanted to tell you first, 'cause I know that you're going to be really excited about this.' And he sent a mockup of the suit he's going to be wearing to me. So, yeah, I'm really excited. I think I was 16 when Brandon's

FLASH SEASON 6

While he addresses *Crisis on Infinite Earths* in the main article, *Flash* executive producer Eric Wallace notes that its impact will be felt throughout the new season of *The Flash*, the villain of which is going to be Dr. Ramsey Rossa/Bloodwork (played by *Heroes*' Sendhil Ramamurthy). "What *Crisis* made us do is make the villain's agenda burn so much hotter than it has in previous seasons," he says, "because by the time he gets to *Crisis*, stuff has to really happen. I'm calling this 'the season of thrills and chills.' That's kind of the marching orders of season 6, and there's a reason for that, because what Team Flash is facing with *Crisis* is so sad and poignant and horrific. The world might end. What does that do to our heroes? It makes them more heroic. At the same time, once that newspaper started to spin wildly at the end of last season, it means no rules apply. Anything you might have thought or might have theorized about what's coming might be wildly inaccurate. And that's on purpose."

ARROW SEASON 8

Nobody is giving details, but we know that the next 10 episodes of *Arrow* are going to be bringing that series to a close. A major reason for that is that actor Stephen Amell, whose show ushered in this modern wave of superhero TV, has a need to move on. A Canadian, Amell desires to become an American citizen, however, given that *Arrow* shoots in Toronto, it's becoming increasingly more difficult for him to do so. "I want to put roots down in Los Angeles," he explains. "I have a nice house there that I've spent maybe 100 days in over the past four years. In order to become an American citizen, you have to spend over 50% of your time there over the course of five years. My daughter is a dual citizen, my wife is American, I own property there, I pay taxes, but I can't vote. So that's actually one of my goals: to spend enough time in the United States that I can qualify to become a citizen."

Additionally, because of his nature, he finds that while he has desires to do a number of things career-wise, he's too focused on the show to achieve any of it. "Another reason I wanted to be done with the show," he notes, "is because I have a difficult time being an aspirational thinker when I'm in the midst of a project. It might actually be true what they say about men and multitasking: I can't do it."

CAPTION: Ruby Rose on the prowl as Batwoman.

Superman movie came out. I mean, I'd just gotten my driver's license and I remember it was the only midnight showing I've ever been to in my life. Like, I went to see that thing open on a summer vacation with my brother and a friend with the Superman emblem and stuff all over my car. We were stoked. And the whole Chris Reeve thing is really deep for me. Last year with Tyler Hoechlin on set was the most surreal thing I've experienced — well, next to being in the Fortress of Solitude — so I don't even know what it's gonna be like to see Brandon in a friggin' Superman suit. I mean, it's crazy!"

"For me, personally, I love *Superman Returns*," Amell adds. "I really hope that Oliver gets to interact with Brandon's *Superman* — on top of working with Tyler again. I hope that Bruce Wayne would show up for some interaction." He will be getting that wish, as Kevin Conroy, who has voiced the character of the Dark Knight on and off since the debut of 1992's *Batman: The Animated Series*, has been signed to play an older Bruce Wayne.

"I TRULY NEVER EXPECTED ANYTHING AS LARGE AND COSMIC AS *CRISIS* TO EVER BE ATTEMPTED FOR TV."

Speaking of wishes, Cress Williams, who plays Jefferson Pierce and the title character on *Black Lightning*, offers, "I was always a big *Superman* fan, so I would love to the crossover to team up with Superman. That would be pretty amazing. From an acting standpoint, I personally would love to play a Green Lantern. If I could put Black Lightning down for just a minute and be a Green Lantern, that would be a blast."

Also having a blast is Marv Wolfman, who is actually contributing to the crossover as a part of the writers' room. Reflecting on the original miniseries, he says, "George and I were trying to show the DC heroes in the best light possible, and I think, considering how big the story was, that we succeeded. Proof of that is that the 12 issues of *Crisis* were originally published in the '80s, yet the book has not gone out of print for 34 years. Fans still think of *Crisis* as the best company-wide crossover ever done, which makes us feel great, because we worked so hard on it.

"Over my career," he closes, "I've had many of my characters appear on TV, live action and animated, and also movies, videogames and more. But I truly never expected anything as large and cosmic as *Crisis* to ever be attempted for TV. Now The CW is doing just that and I, for one, cannot wait to see it. This is pretty amazing and completely humbling."

Look for *Crisis on Infinite Earths* to air in five parts: *Supergirl* on Sunday, December 8 at 8pm; *Batwoman* on Monday, December 9 at 8pm; *The Flash* on Tuesday, December 10 at 8pm; *Arrow* on Tuesday, January 14 at 8pm; and *Legends of Tomorrow* on Tuesday, January 14 at 9pm.

Stephen Amell says "goodbye" to Oliver Queen as *Arrow* heads into its final season on The CW.

SUPERGIRL SEASON 5

Describes executive producer Jessica Queller, "This is our *Black Mirror* season. What we're looking at is how technology is impacting the way people engage and giving them an escape not to engage. It seems like nowadays everyone is kind of on their phones or not really present, so we wanted to speak to that and kind of how it might be hard to live in the ugliness of what's going on, and how a character like Kara can try and help us overcome that. It speaks to a lot of stuff the characters will be going through. Lena Luthor will throw herself into a type of work that is going to increase people relying on tech rather than relying on humans who can hurt you. The way Lena found out about this lie [that Kara is Supergirl] definitely colors how things are going to unfold between her and Kara this season."

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GEEK GEAR

GET YOUR GEAR ON WITH THESE GADGETS, GAMES AND HARDWARE

FORTNITE NEO VERSA PLAYSTATION 4 BUNDLES (SONY)

Two of gaming's most popular properties, PlayStation and *Fortnite*, collide in epic fashion to deliver the ultimate fan-pleasing packages. A new PlayStation 4 bundle,

as well as Gold Wireless headset and DualShock 4 bundles, are catering to seasoned *Battle Royale* soldiers. The *Fortnite* Neo Versa PS4 — with 1 TB hard drive and matching controller — contains codes for exclusive content, including the Epic Neo Versa Outfit, Epic Neo Versa Phrenzy Back Bling and 2000 V-Bucks to invest however you please in the game's various modes.

Of course, if you're a *Fortnite* fan already owning opponents on PS4, this option will sound about as appealing as coming in second place. Thankfully, the *Fortnite* Neo Versa Gold Wireless headset and DS4 bundles have got your back. The former includes all the same *Fortnite* exclusives alongside the headset, while the latter, most budget-friendly option nets you a DualShock 4 controller, Epic Neo Versa Outfit, Epic Neo Versa Phrenzy Back Bling and 500 V-Bucks. Full disclosure: While these bundles promise plenty of *Fortnite* fun, they don't guarantee a Victory Royale. That's on you!

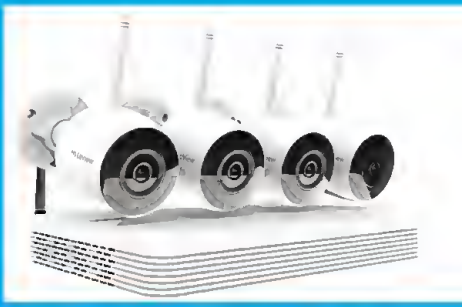
JAWS BOARD GAME
(UNIVERSAL, RAVENSBURGER)

With the summer months behind us, you're probably thinking it's safe to go back in the water. You're wrong. The *Jaws* board game brings Amity Island — and its famous finned foe — to tabletops in a strategy-focused offering from the same minds that unleashed *Disney Villains*. Featuring a unique, two-act play concept, complete with double-sided board, the suspense-fueled game puts players in the role of either iconic heroes Brody, Hopper and Quint, or their blood-thirsty nemesis. Fantastic art from the film and, of course, a tiny but toothy game pawn, round out the feeding-frenzy fun. You're gonna need a bigger game night!

ROLLING THUNDER MICRO PLAYER
(MY ARCADE)

The latest quarter-munching classic to get the miniature-arcade cabinet treatment is Namco's *Rolling Thunder*. The 1986 fan-favorite action side-scroller has been shrunk down to just under seven inches, allowing you to relive the adventures of secret agent Albatross at your desk, on the subway or pretty much anywhere else the evil Geldra organization strikes.

While the Micro Player impressively re-creates the original's graphics, sound and controls, you needn't actually play it to appreciate it. Detailed art — featured on the cabinet's sides, front and marquee — make this one as much a nostalgia-stinging collectible as a thumb-blistering plaything.



1080P HD 4 SECURITY CAMERAS 4CH HOME VIDEO SECURITY CAMERA SYSTEM
(LAVIEW)

If you're tired of paying high monthly fees for a home security system, this high-powered surveillance system allows you to take control of your home security and likely do a better, more thorough job of surveilling your house and lawn than simpler corporate security systems do. This four-channel video camera system comes equipped with IR night vision just like the one you see in every movie about Navy SEALs, and its pre-installed 2TB hard drive comes with an H.264 compression that allows you to squeeze a whole lot of surveillance footage in a small amount of digital storage space. Features include continuous recording, scheduled recording and motion-triggered recording so you can keep either an eye on everything all the time, set monitoring while you're away from home or just wait for foolish burglars to trip your motion sensors and wind up on candid camera. Night vision HD sensors see up to 65 feet into the darkness, and mobile alerts let you know when anyone's approaching your house while you're away, and you can use the complimentary mobile app to keep an eye on things while you're out as well. You can even use a smart search feature to fast-forward through periods of inactivity to find movement in the stored recordings.

ELITE ATLAS AERO HEADSET
(TURTLE BEACH)

Turtle Beach's Atlas headsets have become synonymous with quality, delivering premium audio for PC gamers of all stripes. The Elite Atlas Aero retains its predecessors' crisp sound and crystal-clear chat capabilities but significantly raises the bar...by cutting the cord. Packing 30 hours of battery life, tons of audio-enhancing features and intuitive customization options, the new wireless headset provides the immersive aural experience competitive players and streamers have come to expect from Turtle Beach, while finally untethering them from their gaming rigs.

DIRECTOR FOLDABLE DRONE
(PROTOCOL)

Tired of those annoying remote-control drones that *don't* fold up in your hand for easy transportation and storage? This durable drone features an auto-launch, hover and land function so you don't have to devote precious brain cells to flying. It also features an aerial camera, two POV cameras and a selfie function so you can show the world you're drone-ready. It's crash-resistant, recharges with a USB cord and comes with 480p simultaneous video and photo functions — and it even flies with a smartphone app.

M55D NANO DRONE
(SKY VIPER)

If you really don't want people to see your drones coming, you need to invest in a nano drone — they're really small (like the investment). This nimble little model has Flight Assist technology to smooth out those flight bumps, operates superbly in tiny spaces or out in the great beyond, and is the perfect platform to learn the basics of drone operation. You can perform eight different mind-boggling stunts with just the push of a button, which is sure to impress your non-drone-owning friends. Just remember — you may have to register this baby with the FAA.

ACOUSTIMASS 300 WIRELESS BASS MODULE
(BOSE)

Just in case you've got a Bose SoundTouch 300 soundbar but would like to make your bass performance just a teensy bit more intimidating, the monolithic Bose Acoustimass 300 Wireless Bass Module will add a thunderous rumble to any low-end sound effect or bass musical note and provides the best performance available for a subwoofer in this size range. The unit connects wirelessly to the soundbar and will make your viewing and listening experience much more immersive — and will look mighty sleek while doing it.

SOUNDTOUCH 300 SOUNDBAR
(BOSE)

Why put a bulky stereo system next to your TV when you can disguise your home entertainment system with this sleek soundbar that employs Bose's QuietPort™ and PhaseGuide® technology? The Soundbar eliminates distortion for ground-shakingly deep bass and creates a sonic environment so utterly convincing you'll forget there are speakers in the room. Bluetooth and Wi-Fi let you stream music wirelessly (the SoundTouch® app gives you total control over your music) and ADAPTiQ® audio room calibration takes the brainwork out of setting up your system. The whole system is HDMI-connectible and compatible with the most current television systems.

THE DARK PICTURES: MAN OF MEDAN
(NAMCO BANDAI)

From the developers of horror video game *Until Dawn* comes a new game of frights that traps you on a ship crawling with ghosts. Most of your actions are handled in quick-time events, dialogue choice and mystery. Can you put these spirits to sleep or will you join them? In *Man of Medan*, you can play co-op with a friend, which is a new feature in the game. Some of the cast of this high-profile horror game includes Shawn Ashmore (*X-Men*), Pip Torrens (*Preacher*), Ayisha Issa (*Warm Bodies*) and more. The game is out now for the PS4 and Xbox One.

NI NO KUNI: WRATH OF THE WHITE WITCH REMASTERED
(BANDAI NAMCO)

If you missed the orginal *Ni no Kuni* when it was released on the PS3, don't worry because a new remastered version is on its way to PS4, PC and, for the first time, the Nintendo Switch. From developer LEVEL-5, the classic game returns better than ever with better performance and higher graphics. This tale unfolds with help from the legendary Studio Ghibli through the use of animation storyboarded and created by the studio that brought you *Spirited Away* and *Princess Mononoke*. The music is even composed by the renowned Joe Hisaishi, composer of such films as *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Castle in the Sky*, *Spirited Away* and *Howl's Moving Castle*. The game combines amazing animated scenes, a captivating story and makes for a monumental role-playing adventure experience that is worth playing when it releases September 20!

UNDERWATER LIVE HD VIDEO CAMERA AND LURE
(ECHO POPPER)

Going fishing used to be a way to get away from the world, but weren't you secretly frustrated that you could never see just what the heck was going on under your boat while you tried to lure in a few crappies? Well, now the mysteries of the deep are no more because this combination colorful lure and underwater camera keeps a digital eye on approaching fish with its 135x90 degree wide-angle camera, instantly clueing you in on whether there are any fish underneath you and, if there are, their size and kind. The HD video streams live to your smartphone and can record video almost a dozen feet under the surface. Of course, it's completely waterproof and will operate in saltwater or freshwater, features built-in water temperature and salinity sensors and operates for over 70 minutes at a time using a rechargeable battery.

NINTENDO SWITCH™ LITE

Introducing Nintendo Switch™ Lite, a new version of the Nintendo Switch system that's optimized for personal, handheld play. Nintendo Switch Lite is a small and light Nintendo Switch system at a great price. With a built-in +Control Pad, and a sleek, unibody design, Nintendo Switch Lite is great for on-the-go gaming. Nintendo Switch Lite is compatible with popular games such as Super Mario Odyssey™, Mario Kart™ 8 Deluxe, Super Smash Bros.™ Ultimate, The Legend of Zelda™: Breath of the Wild, and more. If you're looking for a gaming system all your own, Nintendo Switch Lite is ready to hit the road whenever you are.

NINTENDO SWITCH™ LITE CARRY CASE + SCREEN PROTECTOR

Protect your Nintendo Switch™ Lite system when you're on the go; introducing the Nintendo Switch Lite Carrying Case + Screen Protector.

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ARCADE1UP TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES CABINET

Cowabunga! Join those epic turtles in a half-shell with Konami's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Home Arcade Game from Arcade1Up! Fight your way through the *Foot-Clan*, save *April* from *Bebop* and *Rocksteady* and defeat the all-time big baddie, *Shredder*! Play on your own or with up-to four friends as Arcade1Up has brought back the iconic 4 player game control deck, so the only thing you're missing is the pizza for your party!

Konami's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Home Arcade Game also includes 1991's Turtles in Time and a matching branded riser bringing the arcade machine to the playing height you remember for only $399.

SEGA GENESIS MINI CONSOLE

The iconic SEGA Genesis console that defined a generation of gaming returns in a slick, miniaturized unit. The SEGA Genesis Mini console is loaded with 42 legendary games and is plug and play ready right out of the box!

Scare Tactics

BLAIR WITCH RETURNS IN A NEW INTERACTIVE TALE.

by Matt Cabral

2016'S *BLAIR WITCH* DIDN'T DO MUCH TO REIGNITE THE fandom that fueled the horror film franchise's debut 20 years ago, but that hasn't stopped developer Bloober Team from returning to the infamous Black Hills Forest.

The small Polish studio responsible for raising its fair share of goosebumps with its *Layers of Fear* and *Observer* games has applied — and evolved — its frightening formula to the faux found-footage series. But the talented team's ambitious take on the property isn't an interactive retelling of any of the movie's stories, but a new twisted tale.

"The game is based on and inspired by the legend of the Blair Witch and the cinematic lore of her, but it tells an independent, original story," explains narrative designer Barbara Kciuk. "It's set in 1996, so two years after the original film. A young boy has disappeared in the woods near Burkittsville, Maryland, and a police search is organized."

Assuming the role of Ellis,

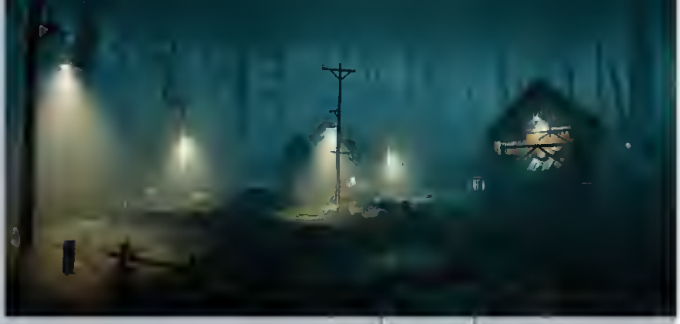
It's just you, your walkie-talkie and your faithful dog, Bullet, against the world in the new *Blair Witch* game.

an ex-cop with a military background, players bravely venture into the cursed forest to search for the boy. From the game's immersive, first-person perspective, you're immediately struck by the world's moody details, from the sunlight filtering through the trees to railroad tracks that have been reclaimed by nature. As Kciuk quickly reminds, however, you're not here to sightsee: "This is the beginning of the nightmare brought upon you by the Blair Witch."

GOOD, DOG!

Before *Blair Witch* scares you, though, it disarms you with adorableness. Thanks to Ellis' canine companion, Bullet, the game's opening encounter is far from frightening. Upon meeting the pooch, you can pet his head, rub his belly and even receive a sloppy kiss from his ample tongue. Featuring incredibly realistic body and facial animations, Bullet immediately feels like a friend.

As Kciuk explains, however, he serves as much more than just an



affectionate sidekick. "Bullet's your loyal dog companion, but he's also smart. He's undergone police dog training, so he follows a number of commands, such as stay, wait and follow." Players access these commands, as well as the option to reprimand the pup if he's being naughty, through an intuitive radial wheel. Even better, you can also reward Bullet by digging into your backpack for a biscuit.

Sending him off to sniff out clues and evidence is especially helpful, allowing you to locate intel that would otherwise go unseen. In certain situations, the very good boy can also dig in the dirt to find some of the game's darker secrets. Beyond his investigative skills, Bullet serves as a great watchdog, alerting you to potential threats. While his barks indicate something potentially interesting or dangerous is close by, his menacing growls and bared fangs suggest something worse. Come across a shadowy creature in the night and his fierce, protective response could even save you from an untimely demise.

Bullet is a fantastic, inspired addition, especially in a genre that too often relies on combat or puzzles for its interactions. But he's much more than a simple gameplay mechanic. Rather than feeling like another tool in your inventory, the faithful pup serves as a more organic part of the experience. His expressive eyes, nuanced motions and range of realistic barks, growls and pants bring him to life, ensuring you'll form a bond with him before you even enter the woods.

GHOUL-FIGHTING GADGETS

On top of having man's best friend (and the witch's worst) in your corner, the game arms you with some simple gear and gadgets. Ellis uses a flashlight to both illuminate the world's many dark environments and fend off light-averse foes. In addition, his block-y, '90s-era cell phone offers him an occasional connection to the outside world, while his 8mm camcorder can play tapes discovered throughout the game. These recordings might contain clues, story elements or creepy found footage.

The old-school camcorder is similar to the device your dad might have lugged around on family vacations, while also possessing a few features that probably weren't covered in its manual. As Kcluk describes, the gadget plays an integral role in cracking some of the game's conundrums. "You can fast-forward, rewind and pause the found footage to manipulate the environment. If a door is currently locked, for example, it can be opened by watching a tape that shows it when it was open."

On top of this neat trick, the camcorder also has a night-vision mode, perfect for illuminating dark paths, while also recording the final, terrifying moments leading up to your unexpected death. While the camera and flashlight can help brighten up a dark forest or pitch-black room, both are intentionally unreliable. *Blair Witch* is about immersing you in its ominous mood and nerve-wracking atmosphere, and nothing fuels those elements like a light flickering off at the most inopportune moment.

■ Atmospheric (and unreliable) lighting helps add to the fearful mood.

Of course, given the game's focus on psychological scares, you can bet a few dim lightbulbs are the least of your worries. *Blair Witch*'s environmental storytelling is second to none, ensuring your fragile mind is never far from having to digest some disturbing discovery. In addition to the unsettling found-footage tapes, there's plenty of unsettling notes

ZOMBIELAND: DOUBLE TAP – ROAD TRIP

BASICS

PLATFORMS: PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, PC

RELEASE: 10/15/2019

IF YOU PREFER A FEW MORE LAUGHS WITH YOUR FRIGHTS, you might want to forgo *Blair Witch*'s slow-burn psychological scares for a slightly less serious take on the horror genre. *Zombieland: Double Tap – Road Trip* fits that bill, delivering fast-paced, over-the-top action that's guaranteed not to send you to bed with nightmares brewing in your brain.

Specifically crafted for co-op play, the game tasks you — and up to three zombie-blasting buddies — with eliminating legions of flesh-eating freaks. The monsters come in over 15 different flavors, including pesky lumberjack zombies, but your arsenal of upgradable weapons, tools and gadgets is more than equal to the task of taking them down.

An original story — inspired by both *Zombieland* films — as well as the ability to unleash heck-fire from behind the skills of favorite characters Columbus, Tallahassee, Wichita and Little Rock, round out this rootin', tootin', zombie-slaying romp.

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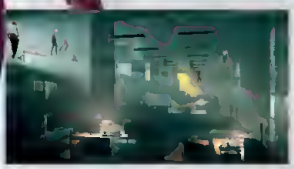

MATURE 17+
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Blood
Strong Language
Violence

PS4 XBOX ONE 505GAMES REMEDY EPIC GAMES STORE

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and symbols to read as well as decrepit shacks to explore.

There's also no shortage of nods to the series' signature scares, from wood-carved talismans and walls covered in handprints to stick figures fashioned from branches and twine. If all this isn't enough to have you rethinking your jaunt in the woods, Kciuk hints that Ellis's state of mind also might have bitten off more than it can chew. "His military service left deep scars on his psyche, which led to some mental problems, causing him to leave the police force." Ellis occasionally receives calls from friends to help calm him down, but a comforting conversation from a familiar voice is no match for the forest's mind-bending tricks.

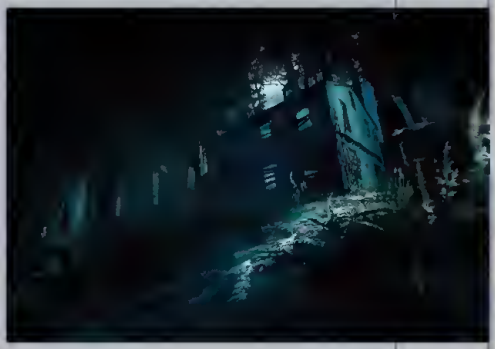
CURSED ENCOUNTERS

If the game's atmospheric setting is capable of fraying your nerves, then its supernatural threats are capable of shredding them raw. *Blair Witch* doesn't swarm you with generic baddies, but rather builds to fewer, more meaningful encounters. You might meet a shadowy creature in the woods, whose quick movements will have you second-guessing what you've just seen, or your surroundings might morph into a monster that literally contorts the trees around you. Regardless of what type of foe you're unlucky enough to face, all are incarnations of the game's blood-curdling namesake.

"The witch is more of a presence or a force than a being," Kciuk explains. "She's not a monster you can encounter and fight with, but she is your enemy nonetheless. She'll twist the forest around you to make it as dangerous as possible, and that includes sending some foes after you."

How you react to the witch and the haunted forest under her control will not only determine your fate in the short term but also shape the game's larger story arc. *Blair Witch* contains several narrative threads with corresponding conclusions and the sum of your actions will influence how each unfolds. If you're brave enough, this sounds like an invitation to replay the game to experience all possible outcomes.

Whether you're in it for the mysterious, terrifying tale or just want to spend some quality time with a canine who'll both affectionately lick your face and scare off cursed forest creatures, *Blair Witch* — available now — welcomes you back to the creepy outskirts of Burkittsville, Maryland.



Say, that abandoned building sure looks inviting, doesn't it? Is that an eerie light inside or just our imagination?

GHOSTBUSTERS:
THE VIDEO GAME REMASTERED

LONG BEFORE THERE WAS ANY TALK OF A reboot or reimagining of the *Ghostbusters* film franchise, there was *Ghostbusters: The Video Game*. Considered a canon sequel when it was originally released in 2009, the acclaimed action-adventure's story was penned by Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis.

BASICS

PLATFORMS: PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, PC

RELEASE: 10/4/2019

The original tale saw players assume the role of a rookie Ghostbuster, learning the ropes alongside Stantz, Spengler, Venkman and Zeddemore. The familiar cast of characters featured the original actors' likenesses as well as their voiceover work. In addition to Aykroyd, Ramis, Bill Murray and Ernie Hudson reprising their roles, fan-favorite supporting characters Janine Melnitz and Walter Peck — played by Annie Potts and William Atherton, respectively — also returned to the series.

More than just a star-studded cast, the title featured familiar cars, creeps and locales from the Ecto-1 and the firehouse HQ to Slimer and the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man. The game also delivered spot-on gameplay that put players behind cool gadgets such as Proton Packs and P.K.E. Meters. Between the original movie's 35th anniversary, the game's 10th, and the highly anticipated next film hitting in 2020, *Ghostbusters* is about to explode like a pair of crossed proton streams. With that mind, this hidden gem is getting an HD remaster, complete with a budget price and the ability to save Manhattan anywhere, anytime on the Nintendo Switch. If you're looking for a great *Ghostbusters* game to fuel your fandom ahead of the next film, well, you know who to call!

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Force Ghosts

STAR WARS JEDI: FALLEN ORDER REPRESENTS A NEW HOPE FOR FANS OF SINGLE-PLAYER GAMES.

by Matt Cabral

November 15, 2019, will be a day long remembered, as it marks the release of *Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order*. While the launch of any game from a galaxy far, far away is a pretty big deal, this latest entry has been anticipated longer than most.

The last decade has offered fans plenty of opportunities to wield lightsabers, fire blasters and use the Force in franchises like *Star Wars: Battlefront* and *LEGO Star Wars*, while a number of other mobile- and online-focused entries have similarly satisfied their fandom for the iconic science fiction saga.

Fallen Order stands out as something a bit more special, however, because it's the first single-player, story-driven *Star Wars* game to hit since 2010's *The Force Unleashed II*. Ever since Starkiller — and his Vader-created clone — hung up his lightsaber in that series, players have been clamoring for a fresh, cinematic, interactive deep-dive into the world George Lucas dreamed up over 40 years ago.

Several ambitious entries have been announced over the years, but their subsequent cancellations have crushed fans' hopes of once again experiencing something as epic as 2003's *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*. In this way, *Fallen Order* represents something especially exciting for those who not only adore all things *Star Wars*, but have been craving an original, narratively rich adventure in the beloved universe.

Fallen Order hasn't just avoided termination, but it has remained true to its original vision of delivering a dedicated, solo-play experience — no small feat for a medium that's become focused on extending a product's value via endlessly playable multiplayer modes and other online-driven content.

Of course, the biggest boon for players awaiting this next blockbuster-to-be is its promising pedigree. Developed by Respawn Entertainment, *Fallen Order* is in the very capable hands of the same folks who raised the bar with both *Titanfall* and, more recently, *Apex Legends*.

And while many would correctly associate those games as multiplayer-focused affairs, they might also recall that the former sequel's single-player campaign is widely considered one of the genre's best. Toss in the spot-on combat, sky-high production values and smart sci-fi storytelling of those games, and Respawn looks like the perfect studio to put single-player *Star Wars* games back on the map.

■ FAST SHIP: Millennium Falcon: Smuggler's Run actually lets fans trigger the craft's epic jump to lightspeed.

MILLENNIUM FALCON

Smuggler's Run Takes Game-like Immersion to the Next Level

Walt Disney World's and Disneyland's new *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge expansions might just contain the coolest, most immersive *Stars Wars* video game we've ever played. The parks' feature attraction, Millennium Falcon: Smuggler's Run, puts guests in the cockpit of the fastest "hunk of junk" in the galaxy, before whisking them away on a seat-of-their-pants adventure that would have Chewbacca buckling up.

But this is no passive experience. While the attraction includes enhanced takes on familiar ride elements and mechanics — such as motion-simulation technology — it raises the bar by encouraging the sort of guest participation that'll feel comfortably familiar to anyone who's ever clutched a game controller.

For starters, the ride sees you accepting specific classes or disciplines, much like in a role-playing game. In this case, players assume the role of pilot, gunner or engineer. Of course, these positions come with assigned tasks and duties. Pilots literally take the controls to steer the ship, while gunners and engineers press specific buttons to fire blasters and harpoons, respectively.

All of these actions unfold in real-time, so steer the ship poorly, and you just might collide with an enormous asteroid. This role also incorporates the same type of controls you'd encounter in a flight simulation game, meaning that pushing down on the throttle sends the Falcon soaring upward and vice versa. Engineers and gunners also see the effects of their actions, as accurate shots turn enemy ships into exploding scrap, while unleashed harpoons lock onto precious cargo.

The attraction also plays like a co-op game, in that communication between participants is key to not returning the Falcon too banged up. Toss in the fact that your performance is tracked and scored, and Smuggler's Run could become your new favorite video game... which happens to be played in an authentically crafted, full-scale replica of the ship that made the Kessel Run in 12 parsecs.

INTERVIEW: SENIOR PRODUCER KASUMI SHISHIDO

We talk Cal Kestis, companion droids and lightsaber combat with one of Respawn's creative forces.

GEEK: FOR THOSE UNFAMILIAR WITH *STAR WARS JEDI: FALLEN ORDER*, CAN YOU TELL US WHAT FANS CAN EXPECT FROM THE GAME?

Kasumi Shishido: *Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order* is a third-person action adventure game with an authentic *Star Wars* story. The game is set shortly after the events of *Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith* when the Jedi were hunted down. In the game, fans will play as a surviving Jedi, Cal Kestis, who is on a mission to complete his training by mastering the power of the force and the iconic lightsaber.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU SHARE ABOUT THIS NEW PROTAGONIST?

KS: We collaborated with the team at Lucasfilm to create Cal specifically for *Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order*. After the Jedi purge, Cal goes into hiding. After an accident exposes him as a Jedi, he goes on the run and is caught in a galaxy-spanning adventure with far-reaching ramifications.

CAN YOU TALK MORE ABOUT THE STORY AND WHERE IT FALLS IN THE LARGER *STAR WARS* TIMELINE?

KS: *Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order* is an authentic *Star Wars* story. It takes place shortly after *Revenge of the Sith* and Order 66 and before the events of *A New Hope*.

CAN FANS EXPECT TO SEE ANY FAMILIAR CHARACTERS OR LOCATIONS IN THE GAME?

KS: Yes. Saw Gerrera, a character *Star Wars* fans first met in *Rogue One*, will be in the game, as will familiar planets like Kashyyyk, the home planet of the Wookiees.

WHAT DOES *FALLEN ORDER'S* LIGHTSABER COMBAT FEEL LIKE?

KS: Lightsaber combat is thoughtful and strategic — it's a balance of attack and defense, breaking an enemy's guard while maintaining your own guard. Players will need to study enemies to find the right time and place to slip through their defenses and strike. Combat feels rewarding and challenging.

CAN YOU DISCUSS SOME OF THE FORCE POWERS, AND HOW THEY COMPLEMENT

■ ADORABLE ASSISTANT: BD-1 is Cal's cute droid companion, but he also serves a number of game-progressing purposes.

■ FRESH FOES: Not all enemies are created equal, as many pack unexpected powers and weapons.

■ FAMILIAR FACES: Expect to meet some fan-favorite characters, like Saw Gerrera, on your journey

■ Players will need to complement Cal's lightsaber skills with Force powers to thwart larger threats.

H WALKER: Cal's fluid wall-run ability will be familiar to fans of Respawn's previous games.

THE LIGHTSABER COMBAT? ALSO, CAN THE FORCE BE USED OUTSIDE OF COMBAT?

KS: Players use both familiar Force powers and some new ones to pair with lightsaber combat. For example, you can pair "Slow" with a lightsaber throw to take down enemies like Stormtroopers. You can also use Force powers outside of combat; for instance, "Flip" will help you traverse.

WHAT OTHER TYPES OF GAMEPLAY, ASIDE FROM COMBAT, WILL PLAYERS DIVE INTO?

KS: Exploration! As players explore the planets in the game, they must overcome harsh terrains that present increasingly challenging obstacles. In many cases, they won't be able to access these areas when they first find them, but as they continue their Jedi training and grow in power, they'll discover new powers that help them complete the mission.

WHAT SORTS OF ENEMIES CAN WE EXPECT TO ENCOUNTER? ANY FAMILIAR THREATS? ANY NEW ONES CREATED SPECIFICALLY FOR THE GAME?

KS: The game will introduce players to both new and familiar enemies. One in particular is the Inquisitorius, special agents whose main purpose is to seek out and destroy the remaining Jedi. They'll also face Purge Troopers, a new class of soldiers who assist The Inquisitorius in their work. On top of that, players will also encounter a variety of environmental hazards, including hostile creatures on alien worlds, ancient traps, forgotten temples and, of course, the full might of the Empire.

■ WITH GREAT POWER: Players will master both lightsaber combat and the ways of the Force as they're hunted by the Empire.

ARE THERE ANY UPGRADE PATHS OR ROLE-PLAYING GAME-LIKE PROGRESSION SYSTEMS?

KS: I can't share too much information here, but I can say that yes, players will be able to earn points and be able to level up skills and abilities throughout their journey as Cal.

CAL'S COMPANION DROID, BD-1, LOOKS LIKE A COOL ADDITION. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT EXACTLY IT IS AND ITS ROLE IN THE STORY AND GAMEPLAY?

KS: BD-1 is Cal's most trusted and faithful friend. Some of BD-1's unique skills include lighting up areas with his flashlight, pointing out to Cal when there are hidden lore tidbits nearby, exploring tight areas where Cal can't fit, and slicing doors to unlock new areas. BD-1 can also toss Cal a health stim to help him recover HP.

CAN YOU TALK A BIT ABOUT THE TRAVERSAL GAMEPLAY – SWIMMING, CLIMBING, WALL-RUNNING – AND HOW THAT PLAYS INTO THE GAME?

KS: This is where the "Respawn feel" especially comes through in *Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order*. Levels are built with traversal and re-traversal in mind. It's surprisingly fun to just move around in the world and discover new paths and secrets. These gameplay mechanics also come in handy in combat and help solve puzzles.

■ FORCE-SENSITIVE?: We wouldn't be surprised if Control's hero Jesse was a Jedi in a past life.

A FORCE OF A DIFFERENT KIND

Jesse Faden does not side with the light or dark side. In fact, she's never appeared in a *Star Wars* film or any project associated with the famed sci-fi property. She does, however, wield Force-like powers that could put Darth Vader to shame on his best day. Played by actress Courtney Hope, Jesse is the protagonist of Remedy Entertainment's excellent *Control*. Leaning slightly more toward supernatural than science fiction, the story-driven action-adventure unravels a mysterious tale involving an otherworldly threat dubbed the Hiss.

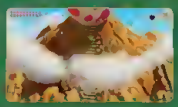
As Jesse, it's your job to fight this menacing entity with any means necessary. On top of wielding a highly upgradable sidearm, players will unleash paranatural abilities, powerful skills that wouldn't look out of place in a Jedi Temple. Jesse's "launch" ability, for example, allows her to levitate objects before hurling them at enemies, while her "melee" can blast targets backward with all the power of a Force-push.

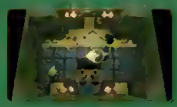
These skills only scratch the surface, however, as others – like "levitate" and "evade" – fuel their own offensive and defensive abilities. Combining Jesse's paranatural powers packs some unexpected surprises, including several that could even teach an old Jedi some new tricks.

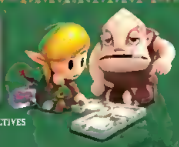
If your love of the Force hasn't been completely satisfied by the time you conclude Cal's adventure in *Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order*, *Control*'s similar gameplay mechanics – with some inspired twists tossed in – will happily scratch that itch.

NINTENDO SWITCH

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA
Link's Awakening







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by Mark A. Altman

AVENGERS: ENDGAME (MARVEL/DISNEY)

The MCU Phase Three comes to a smashing conclusion with a satisfying superhero blockbuster which, to steal a phrase from the halcyon days of MGM, boasts more stars (and superheroes) than there are in heaven. This loaded UHD disc features a sharp 4K hi-def transfer and muscular sound that you can load and watch in a snap.

APOCALYPSE NOW: THE FINAL CUT (LIONSGATE)

Francis Ford Coppola's masterpiece gets the ultra-HD treatment and it was worth the wait. Along with the original theatrical cut, *Apocalypse Now Redux* and the new Final Cut in 4K combining the best of all versions, it also includes the brilliant *Heart of Darkness* doc about the turbulent making of the film. This is the stuff reference discs are made of. Lionsgate gets it right with this stunning addition to the UHD marketplace, which sets a new benchmark for classic titles on the format.

WHAT WE LEFT BEHIND: LOOKING BACK AT STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE (SHOUT! FACTORY)

The unjustly overlooked *Deep Space Nine* finally gets its due in this documentary from showrunner Ira Steven Behr. Although at times it veers too much into fan service (e.g., the opening musical number) rather than actually telling the real story of why this fantastic *Trek* series is often dismissed by fans, there are a bountiful array of special features and a wonderful look inside a fantasy writers room for a mythical season 8 that make it more than worth the price of admission.

CAPTAIN MARVEL (MARVEL/DISNEY)

Captain Marvel finally comes to the MCU in this diverting and fun precursor to *Endgame* anchored by a charming star turn by Brie Larson as the titular heroine. Although special features aren't extensive, the disc itself looks and sounds absolutely marvel-ous as it reminds you of why we love the '90s.

WEIRD SCIENCE (ARROW RELEASING)

Although it's not top-tier John Hughes, Arrow Releasing gives *Weird Science* a welcome steelbook release, which is an appealing double-dip for fans of this movie. While the film is not as beloved as *The Breakfast Club* or *Pretty In Pink*, the effervescent Kelly LeBrock and an amusing turn by Bill Paxton make this a welcome upgrade from the bare-bones original Universal release.

You can follow Mark on Twitter at @markaaltman and for his weekly thoughts on movies don't miss The 4:30 Movie podcast wherever you listen to podcasts (@430moviepod).

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Erin Gray

Wilma Deering finally gets out of spandex and gets to be captain.

By Ed Gross

FOR A COUPLE OF GENERATIONS OF FANS, actress Erin Gray has been and forever will be Colonel Wilma Deering of the 1979–81 TV series *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*. And not only is she fine with that, she's great with it. If she has one complaint, it's that, until now, she's been held back from being made captain.

"I know I was commander of the Earth Defense, OK?" she says, "but being a captain has been on my bucket list. I auditioned for Captain Janeway on *Star Trek: Voyager* and didn't get it. All the times I did *Battle of the Network Stars*, the networks would never let women be captains. I'm like, 'Really? You have to be a man to be a captain?' But, now, I've finally gotten to be captain!"

Providing her with that opportunity is The CW's summer sci-fi series *Pandora*. Gray guest stars as — you guessed it! — a ship captain who finds herself involved in the unfolding mystery of the series.

"When I read the script," she recalls, "I remember going, 'Oh, my God, it's a *Buck Rogers* script. I haven't read one of these in a long time.' That's how I felt. Then I'd read through it and say, 'That kind of reminds me of that movie ... I wonder if they're referencing that movie.' Then I get on the set in Europe, and I find out that everything is making a reference to something sci-fi. I'm realizing I'm working with a bunch of sci-fi boys — the producers and director — who are having fun, which is great. So there's that sense of play, and it was fun to delve into that."

What's also fun for her is the fact that she's CEO of her own company, Heroes for Hire, which is not about going out and saving the world so much as it is about booking celebrities for the convention circuits around town.

She reflects that, after her divorce, she found herself bankrupt and looking for direction. "Then," Gray explains, "I was slowly introduced to the convention world through BarBara Luna, who called me up and said, 'Go to this place and show up with 600 pictures. You're going to sign them for a lot of fans and you're going to call me up and say, 'Thank you.'" So I went to my first convention and there was this big line around the building. I found the promoter, introduced myself and asked, 'What is that line for?' He said, 'Oh, that's for you.' It was a whole new world."

She mentioned the next convention to her *Buck Rogers* costar Gil Gerard, who wanted to get involved and promised her 10% of his take. She tried to refuse, but he insisted. "He said, 'I'm going to make you work for it,' and he did. Then Marc Singer from *Beastmaster* and *V* called me up and said, 'I want to go to the next convention.' And I went, 'OK. And it's 10%.' Suddenly the business is off and running." And it hasn't slowed down since.

Photo by Lesley Bohm Photography

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